

PRESS RELEASE – CITY OF HIRAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

To: All media outlets
From: Chief T. A. Vande Zande
Ref: Press Release
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Police Response to Persons Affected by Mental Illness: One Mind Campaign

Hiram, GA

The Hiram Police Department is pleased to announce that they have pledged to take action in support of the International Association of Chiefs of Police's One Mind Campaign, with the intent to unite local communities, public safety organizations, and mental health organizations in such a way that the three become "of one mind." The One Mind Campaign seeks to ensure successful interactions between police officers and persons with mental illness. To join the campaign, over the next 36 months, the department has committed to implementing four promising practices:

- (1) establishing a clearly defined and sustainable partnership with one or more community mental health organization(s),*
- (2) developing and implementing a model policy addressing police response to persons affected by mental illness,*
- (3) training and certifying 100 percent of the agency's sworn officers (and selected nonsworn staff, such as dispatchers) in Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety, and*
- (4) providing Crisis Intervention Team training to a minimum of 20 percent of the agency's sworn officers (and selected non-sworn staff, such as dispatchers.)*

Chief Vande Zande stated, "We are supporting this initiative because we recognize the need to find more effective ways to address the way all of us deal with persons suffering from mental illness. We know the solution to this problem mandates forming partnerships with mental health organizations and with local community service organizations. We also know that internally, training personnel in recognizing someone suffering a mental crises and teaching them effective de-escalation techniques will provide for the successful resolution of a crises encounter."

The Hiram Police Department acknowledges the need to recognize and address recent societal, cultural, and technological changes that impact law enforcement responses to persons with mental illness. The strategies that the department has pledged to adopt create a unique opportunity to form a partnership with mental health organizations in the community. The committed efforts of both law enforcement agencies and the mental health community to reduce officer and civilian fatalities and injuries resulting from encounters between law enforcement officials and persons with mental illness are of critical importance. Pledging to support the One Mind Campaign is the first step towards creating a safer community for all. For more information on the One Mind Campaign visit <http://www.theiacp.org/onemindcampaign>. A copy of the full report, Improving Police Response to Persons Affected by Mental Illness, links to additional resources and a list of all agencies that have taken the pledge is also available on the website.

END RELEASE

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